

Troy City Dog Park Recommendations

This document has been prepared by the Dog Park Committee appointed by the Troy City Council in 2018. Its purpose is to advise the City's administration and the City Council on dog park planning and in coordination with the City's planning department.

Dog parks provide important social and health benefits for dogs, their human companions, and the broader community. They provide a space where pets can get the exercise they need, particularly in a city where many dog owners may not have access to larger outdoor areas that are fenced in. Access to secure open space not only benefits the dog, but the owner, by helping maintain the dog's health, decreasing the potential of expensive vet bills, and creating opportunities for people to be active with their dogs. Dog parks can further lend towards broader public safety. Creating a fenced off-leash space to help ensure that dogs remain leashed in other areas of the City in compliance with leash law, can decrease the chance that an unsafe situation may occur with an off-leash dog. In addition, dog parks create opportunities for owners to connect and to build community that can extend beyond the park. Once more, they help increase the regular use and visibility of our city parks, and deepen community investment in maintaining parks as vital public spaces.

Currently, Troy has one small dog park in Kinloch Park. The dog park is maintained by the City as part of the larger park that it is a part of. This maintenance plan appears to work well for the dog park's general needs: mowing, garbage removal, etc. Unfortunately, the size of the park is not well suited for larger dogs and its location at the back of that park is not accessible for some residents. Based on both the challenges of this site and what's working well, the Committee has worked to identify and review potential dog park locations.

In doing so, the Committee has considered the following:

- site specifications included in the 2018 "Dog Park Implementation Overview" report by Collar City Canines prepared for the Troy City Council;
- locations identified within the City's code as allowing for dog parks; how central and accessible a given site appeared to be for residents;
- the amount of space available relative to the needs of a dog park; the ability to become ADA compliant;
- the potential for access to water and other beneficial facilities nearby;
- the degree of site preparation and ongoing maintenance needed; and
- the costs involved in that preparation and maintenance.

Based on those considerations, the Committee has chosen to focus its recommendations on a single site within Prospect Park. Recognizing that no one location is likely to meet every ideal characteristic of the perfect dog park, the Committee tried to ensure that as many park needs were addressed as possible, while considering the initial location as one from which to take lessons. These lessons are intended to be seen as both helpful to the continued improvement of the initial park, and instructive with respect to the establishment of further parks in other areas of the city. Following the implementation of a dog park at the initial location, the Committee recommends the establishment of two or more subsequent locations in order to make dog parks accessible to residents that live in different parts of the city and decrease the pressure on any one

park. And, it further recommends that one of these locations be in Frear Park, while another be in a ‘downhill’ location in Central/South Troy.

Ideal Site Specifications

To ensure that this dog park is utilized properly and for its intended purpose, basic site specifications should be met. Below is a list of specifications that are important to a functional and effective dog park.

The dog park should include the following components:

- A fenced area that is at minimum a half acre of open space, and ideally an acre or more of space
- Signage with rules and guidelines for visitors
- Fencing with minimum height of 5 feet
- A double-gated entry to the fenced area to keep dogs contained, ideally two - one that is a dedicated entrance and one that is a dedicated exit
- A streetscape and entrance to the fenced area that is ADA compliant
- A waste management feature
- Nearby access to water facilities for human and animal consumption, and ideally access within the fenced area or just outside
- A site with adequate stormwater drainage and grass-like groundcover
- A seating area to rest, such as picnic table or bench
- A shaded section of the fenced area, preferably where seating is located and within the ADA accessible area of the park
- Parking for vehicles and bicycles in the vicinity of dog park

Risk Mitigation

Risks can be mitigated with proper signage displayed in the entrance to the park detailing a list of rules regulations, and guidelines. Only dogs with proper licensing from the City of Troy will be permitted to use the park which reduces potential liability issues. These licenses require that dogs are up to date on their rabies vaccinations.

The city may consider installing a sign-in sheet and maintain a contact list of dog park visitors for outreach purposes. This can help with accountability for maintenance and to coordinate volunteer workshops with associated community groups and organizations.

Recommended Location

Description: The location recommended to the City of Troy by the Dog Park Committee is near the northwest corner of Prospect Park (see red highlighted map below). The Committee considered locations in other designated areas of the city for a dog park, and determined Prospect Park to be preferable as the site of the first dog park due to its central location, relative size, and ability to provide some buffer area for neighbors. The one drawback of this location that the

Committee considered was the diminished winter-accessibility of the Park, given that the roads are closed, and not currently plowed, for the season.



The recommended site is uphill from the main pavilion and is therefore not in direct view of that area or most highly active sites in the park (like the tennis courts). The site is also separated from the playground by a long field. The Committee recommends adding shrubs in strategic locations between these and other areas.

The site is a relatively flat area that is covered in grass, making it an easier and more affordable area in which to install the necessary materials for a dog park, as well as to maintain one. The site has a few large trees and a telephone pole with a light, lending to both shade during the day and visibility in early evening hours. The location of the site also lends towards accessibility, as it has potential car access from the currently closed off portion of Prospect Park Road and a small parking lot next to it. The committee was particularly concerned that any site that was recommended be able to become ADA compliant, and these characteristics of the site were valued as a result.

The recommended site was also preferred by the committee to two other potential sites considered in Prospect Park. One of these other sites, highlighted in orange on the map above, is located by the old swimming pool. The other site, highlighted in yellow, is located in the area off Hale Street. While both of these sites also came with their own particular benefits, the recommended site was preferred to these two areas due to the relatively readiness of the grounds for a park and lack of mitigating structures or materials that might need to be addressed. These confounding factors at the other sites presented greater present and future potential costs or liabilities compared to the recommended site. The one relative draw back of this site was the location of water lines (see figure below). However, the rough estimates from the city for extending water lines, even those closer to other sites, were all too significant to be considered feasible in the immediate term and were therefore not centrally consider in the choosing one location over another. This was particularly the case as direct water access was not seen as an absolute need, provided that water was accessible nearby, but a goal of the park.

Site preparation & infrastructure needs

The construction of the dog park is recommended in two phases. Phase I of the construction addresses: fencing, waste stations, and signage. Phase II addresses: ADA compliance, seating, and more direct water access (as is feasible) from the water lines depicted in the utilities map below.

Phase one has an estimated cost of \$30,000-40,000 and a timeline of roughly 6 months based on estimates from local fencing companies, the estimated costs of nearby dog parks, and feedback



from the city. During this time, the section of Prospect Park Road would need to be reopened to the public and the lot near the site would need to be made usable for vehicles. The Committee recommends that the city consider putting in traffic-calming mechanisms to ensure that the road is shared safely. In addition, fencing and signage would need to be installed, and the city would need to put appropriate plans in place for staff to maintain the park (namely, regarding mowing and waste removal, as well as seasonal maintenance).

The type of fencing recommended by the committee is 5-6 foot black aluminum fencing. It is further recommended that there be a double entry gate for people and their dogs, as well as an additional entry point through a wide service gate for the use of maintenance vehicles. While the black aluminum fencing was quoted at a slightly higher cost than chain-metal link fencing, the committee considered the ease and cost of being able to replace a single panel of the aluminum fencing, which appears to be more difficult to damage, compared with having to replace much longer sections of chain-metal if one part of it is damaged. The committee also felt the black aluminum fencing was more aesthetically appealing and would retain more appeal to park visitors.

The dog park should have adequate signage with clearly displayed set of rules for dog park users. The sign should be easily visible and should be legible by persons with visual impairments. The city should consider including the following rules on the signage:

- Dogs must be leashed while in Prospect Park, until entering and upon exiting the dog park
- Owners are legally responsible for the behavior of their dog(s) at all times
- Owners must be within the dog park and supervising their dog(s) at all times
- Owners are responsible for removing their dog if the dog displays aggressive behavior
- Unsupervised dogs will be reported dog control
- Only dogs that are licensed and have current vaccinations are allowed in the park
- Unspayed dogs in heat and puppies who have not completed all their vaccinations yet are not permitted in the park
- Dogs must be trained to respond to voice or other appropriate commands
- No food, dog treats, and glass containers are permitted in the dog park
- Owners must pick up after their dog(s) and use the appropriate waste station(s)
- Minors must be accompanied at all times by an adult
- Dogs can be licensed with the City of Troy through the Clerk's' Office at: [contact]
- If you see an unattended dog please call animal control [contact]

The dog park should also have appropriate waste stations so that dog owners can take care of their dog's waste. These stations should either include a dug septic tank (as in the nearby East Greenbush Dog Park), or include one or two covered waste bins along with the provision of bags. Committee members further suggested with regard to the provision of bags that the site could provide a receptacle for residents' used grocery or other bags for this purpose to cut down on the production of waste.

Suggested Maintenance Schedule for the Dog Park:

Continued bi-weekly tasks of City staff:

- Mowing and Weed-whacking within and along fence line
- Waste and recycling removal from can(s).

Additional bi-weekly tasks of City staff:

- Resupply Waste Bag Station(s)
- Pick up trash around fences.
- Visual inspection of condition of sod, fencing, gates, benches and water line.

Seasonal Responsibilities:

- Re-seeding bare spots in sod.
- Filling ruts and holes.
- General care of fences and gates, benches.

Costs & Recommendations for Phase I

- Signage: \$100-200
- Fencing: \$30-35,000
- Waste stations: \$300-400
- Maintenance: estimated workload of 2.5 hours/bi-weekly